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Brecknockshire

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BRECKNOCKSHIRE HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM - NEUADD BRYCHEINIOG, BRECON, POWYS ON WEDNESDAY, 19 JULY 2017

PRESENT: County Councillor M J Dorrance – Chairman

County Councillors J Charlton, S C Davies, E Durrant, J Evans, L Fitzpatrick, M R Harris, K Laurie-Parry, S Lewis, S McNicholas, DW Meredith, JG Morris, WD Powell, D R Price, J Pugh, G W Ratcliffe, E Roderick, K S Silk, D A Thomas, T J Van-Rees, D H Williams, R Williams, S L Williams and I McIntosh

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meetings of the Committee held on Wednesday 25th January and Wednesday 18th May 2017.

3. ROLE, REMIT AND PURPOSE

The Chairman welcomed all members, and in particular new members, to the first Brecknockshire meeting of the new Council. The issue of operating shire meetings had been questioned towards the end of the last Council when it had been agreed to continue with them. The constitution allows for bi-monthly meetings for Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire and quarterly meetings for Brecknockshire with the ability of the Chair to call additional meetings if required. Shire meetings are the most local meetings arranged through Democratic Services. Attendance at Shire meetings would not count towards figures held for review by the Standards Committee. The powers of Shires had been limited to determining Traffic Regulation Orders. The Chairman invited members to provide views in relation to the operation of shire meetings. It was suggested that meetings should have more of a local focus and that third parties, or similar, should be invited to update and discuss projects/plans. The format of meetings could also be change to allow for interaction between members and town and community councils from within the shire area. Some members felt that shire meetings took away from the 'One Powys' approach. In the light of the position members **RESOLVED** to request that the appropriate committee review the operation and function of shire meetings alongside the review of the role of the Chair of Council and civic functions.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interested made by members in relation to items to be discussed on the agenda.

5. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements from the Chairman.

6.	REPORTS FROM AND QUESTIONS TO CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS
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Members welcomed the opportunity to receive reports from, and to put questions to, Cabinet Portfolio Holders. During updated and discussion particular reference was made to:

The Leader, County Councillor Mrs Rosemarie Harris

- a. **Brecon Cultural Hub** – members requested re-assurance that the name of the hub would reflect the shire. It was noted that the site had secured some grant funding from the Military Covenant. Members would welcome an update in relation to the development and its operations to the next shire meeting
- b. **Hay Town Council** – the local member for Hay-on-Wye thanked the Leader for engaging with the Town Council in relation to matters
- c. **Cabinet Vision** – Cabinet’s vision would be aired at the Royal Welsh Show. The vision would not be costed but would provide detail of the direction of travel. Supporting the economy and local regeneration would feature highly. There would be appropriate promotion
- d. **Household Recycling Sites** – the Leader is confident that £400k of savings included within the Medium Term Financial Plan would be identified from the budget. A member requested details in relation to the data used by Cabinet to inform a recent decision to review operation hours etc. Communities seem to value sites and favour retaining them. A member felt that the Council had not communicated enough with members regarding plans for local areas and in general terms in relation to wider recycling matters
- e. **Joint Venture Company (Repairs and Maintenance of Housing Stock)** – members felt that they could be better informed about the operation of the JVC and also felt that tenants should have been advised of the transfer (many tenants claim to be unaware of the JVC)
- f. **Council Tax Levels /Budget Flaw** – a member referred to the drive of the Welsh Government to maintain low levels of Council Tax. The Leader reminded members that providing a funding floor for qualifying authorities had been built into policy
- g. **May Election** – the Leader would recognise those issues raised by the electorate during the May 2017 election period. The Council engaging better with its communities came through as a theme for most Cabinet members at election time
- h. **Communication with Members** – members urged the Leader to ensure that the Council communicates with its members quickly on matters of public interest. Media and local reports about Council matters which are made without the local member being aware could cause embarrassment. The Leader reminded members that decisions are often reported very quickly via social media
- i. **Llandrindod and Builth Wells High School Sites** – in the light of comments made at the meeting it was agreed that there should be a media release to confirm that Cabinet had agreed to operating one school over two sites. Members were urged to help quash any rumours to the contrary

Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Education, County Councillor Myfanwy Alexander

- a. **Transformation Programme** – there are challenges that would need to be met to deliver education with reduced budgets, however, there are also real opportunities
- b. **New School Inspection Framework** – a new framework would have wider regard to the well-being of learners (whilst continuing to recognise the importance of achievement). Authorities would be required to support schools and their governing bodies on delivering on requirements. The Minister views partnership working as important
- c. **Brecon High School Welsh Stream** – the Cabinet decision to retain the Welsh stream at Brecon High had been welcomed locally
- d. **Gwernyfed High School Consultation** – the cost of the consultation had been £1.2 million. The result of the exercise had been to retain the site. The cost of the exercise had re-enforced the importance of engaging with communities
- e. **Welsh Medium Learning** – the main issue to address (a national as well as local issue to Powys) had been the ability to recruit and retain Welsh speaking teaching staff in order to deliver a Welsh medium curriculum
- f. **Delegated Budget** – there are some schools which seem to manage their budgets very well and others which don't and it is not clear why. In order to understand the position better and to review arrangements for delegating funding from the Authority to schools via the Fair Funding Formula and in order to better understand school spends there would be a review undertaken. The local member for Ystradgynlais reported that a school inspector had recently stated that the budget for the local high school had not be set right and that the school was underfunded by the Authority. The spend on Additional Learning Needs would also need to be better understood and reviewed. Member input regarding schools spends in their areas would be welcomed
- g. **Central Services** – alongside the delegated budget review there would be a review of school support services
- h. **School Business Managers** – the Welsh Government seem to favour introducing business managers in order to support schools with business functions which would remove those tasks from headteachers and the senior management team to enable them to focus on delivering learning. There had been issues (nationally and locally) regarding headteacher and teacher stress which would need to be considered. It was felt that nurturing and supporting those teachers who had an appetite to progress in their careers would be positive and allow for very senior positions to be filled more easily and by the right people. The local member for Iffon Valley C P School reported that the headteacher position had been advertised four times with no appointment being made (the Portfolio Holder would meet with the local member upon request)
- i. **Youth Services** – a member would welcome detail in relation to the provision of youth service functions and how schools and the youth service work together to support young people
- j. **Exclusion from School** – it is the strong view of the portfolio holder that excluded learners should be put on re-integration programmes with the aim of returning to school as opposed to relying on movement to alternative schools or different methods of schooling
- k. **Distance Learning** – while distance learning for A Level seemed to work well it was not clear how effective it would be for teaching larger numbers of learners at GCSE level. There would be appropriate research and pilots if operating this way was to be considered in Powys (it could work well). A strong curriculum offer at post 16 would, hopefully, retain learners within Powys

7. ROAD SAFETY AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT
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Members welcomed Tony Caine, Traffic and Travel Manager to the meeting for this item of business.

Brecon Parking Review 2

Members **RESOLVED** to partially uphold the objection to the spur off Silver Street and to over-rule all of the remaining objections and implement the Order.

During discussion it was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Democratic Services Committee that the function of agreeing to consult on TRO matters should be delegated to the local member(s) in the ward under consideration. The outcome of the consultation and subsequent determination of the TRO or otherwise should be determined by the relevant shire.

8. APPOINTMENTS TO WORKING GROUPS AND OUTSIDE BODIES

Members welcomed the opportunity to receive reports from, and to put questions to, members serving on outside bodies. It was reported that appointments to outside bodies would be considered by approach and not by default as in previous years. Members appointed to the following:

Body/Organisation	County Councillor Representative(s)
Brecon University scholarship Fund	Councillor TJ Van-Rees Councillor DW Meredith
Local Development Plan Working Group	Councillor R Williams Councillor K Laurie-Parry
Powys Community Endowment Fund	Councillor TJ Van-Rees Councillor DW Meredith
Powys Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education	Councillor J Charlton
Sportslot Community Chest	Councillor J Evans
Theatr Brycheiniog Board of Governors	Councillor TJ Van-Rees Councillor E Roderick
Brecon and Monmouth Canal Steering Group	Councillor J Charlton Councillor S Lewis (deputy)
Black Mountain College Concept	Councillor W Powell Councillor E Durrant
Brecon Beacons National Park Liaison Committee	Councillor J Morris Councillor M Dorrance Councillor William Powell Councillor I McIntosh Councillor K Silk Councillor J Evans
TJ Jones Scholarship Fund	Councillor S McNicholas Councillor S Lewis Councillor W Powell
Keith Morris Memorial Fund	Councillor D Meredith

Gwyn's Arms Houses	Councillor G Ratcliffe
Hay PTFA	Councillor G Ratcliffe
Bronllys Well-being Park Trustees	Councillor W Powell
Tenants Liaison Forum	Councillor H Williams Councillor J Charlton
Community Health Council	Councillor H Williams Vacancy
Ystradgynlais Welfare Hall	Councillor S McNicholas Councillor S Williams
Industrial Countryside Alliance	Councillor S Williams

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were reminded that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 11th October and would be followed by the Annual Garden Award presentation. The Chair would welcome a different approach to the presentations this year and would discuss with the organisers.

A member requested a Fire Authority update to a future meeting

**County Councillor MJ Dorrance
Chairman**

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